

FIRST DRAFT

# ALICE

"86 THE WAITRESSES"



**WARNER BROS.  
TELEVISION**

FIRST DRAFT

"ALICE"

"86 The Waitresses"

By

Sybil Adelman

Warner Bros. Television  
4000 Warner Boulevard  
Burbank, California 91522

"ALICE"

CAST LIST

ALICE HYATT.....LINDA LAVIN  
MEL.....VIC TAYBACK  
FLO.....POLLY HOLLIDAY  
VERA.....BETH HOWLAND  
TOMMY HYATT.....  
KENNY COLE.....  
MRS. CONROY.....  
JAPANESE MAN #1.....  
JAPANESE MAN #2.....  
JAPANESE EXTRAS.....

SETS

INT. MEL'S DINER  
INT. ALICE'S APARTMENT  
INT. CONROY PERSONNEL AGENCY

"ALICE"

"86 The Waitresses"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. MEL'S DINER - LATE AFTERNOON

(MEL IS COOKING. VERA IS FRANTICALLY  
SEARCHING THROUGH CONTAINERS BEHIND  
THE COUNTER)

VERA

(SLIGHTLY PANICKED)

Teabags. Where are the teabags?

(FINDING THEM, HOLDS UP THREE TEABAGS)

Mel, we only have three teabags.

MEL

(NOT LOOKING UP)

When Queen Elizabeth comes to  
Phoenix, I'll reorder. Who  
drinks tea here?

(VERA POINTS TO TABLES - TABLES ARE  
FILLED WITH JAPANESE MEN, WEARING  
TEN-GALLON HATS AND STRING TIES.  
THEY'RE WEARING CAMERAS AROUND NECK.  
THEY ARE SPEAKING JAPANESE.  
ALICE IS ADDING UP CHECKS AT TABLE.  
SHE SPEAKS LOUDLY, SLOWLY AND  
DELIBERATELY)

ALICE

Who had the chili?

(CONVERSING IN JAPANESE, NOBODY RESPONDS)

ALICE

Chili?

(THE MEN LOOK UP)

ALICE (CONT'D)

(HOLDING UP CHECK)

Chili?

(IN DESPERATION SHE BEGINS TO MIME  
SHIVERING. ONE MAN RAISES HIS HAND.  
ALICE HANDS HIM CHECK. POINTING TO  
HER RIBS)

The short ribs?

(THE MEN LAUGH AS ANOTHER SIGNALS.  
ALICE HANDS HIM CHECK)

ALICE (CONT'D)

(LOOKING AT HER BODY, NOT KNOWING  
ITS LOCATION)

The liver? Where's my liver?

(TO HERSELF)

I should've paid more attention  
in biology.

(CALLS)

Flo, where's the liver?

(FLO CROSSES TO ALICE)

FLO

Next to the corned beef hash.

(ALICE SHRUGS, PUTS CHECK ON TABLE)

FLO

(TO ALICE, INDICATING TABLE)

How about that? A whole  
convention of jockeys.

ALICE

(NERVOUSLY)

Flo...

FLO

(AS AN ASIDE TO ALICE)

How do they play basketball in  
Japan?

JAPANESE MAN #1

(IN PERFECT ENGLISH)

Badly.

FLO

(SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSED)

Oh, you speak...

JAPANESE MAN #1

Frequently.

FLO

Shoot, fellas...I didn't mean  
anything. Some of my best  
friends are...ah...short. Like,  
Alice here.

(FLO AND THE MEN LAUGH AS SHE CROSSES  
TOWARD COUNTER)

ALICE

(CALLING AFTER HER)

Thanks a lot, Flo.

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

(TO MEN)

You'll have to forgive her...she  
didn't mean anything by all that.

JAPANESE MAN #2

(GOOD NATUREDLY)

That's okay.

ALICE

But, you've got to admit, every time  
she opens her mouth, something  
interesting comes out...

(BEAT)

Usually her foot.

SFX: BUS HORN HONKING

JAPANESE MAN #2

That's us. We have to split.

(THEY ALL GET UP)

If you're ever in Tokyo...

ALICE

(SMILING)

I'll be sure to look you up.

Sayonara.

JAPANESE MAN #1

(LAUGHING)

Later.

(THEY EXIT. ALICE PLOPS DOWN ON CHAIR,  
EXHAUSTED. FLO CROSSES TO ALICE)

FLO

(SITTING DOWN AND RUBBING FOOT - WEARILY)

Sugar, I am bushed. Happens every  
tourist season. I tell you, a day  
like today would even wipe the  
smile off Mary Tyler Moore.

(VERA CROSSES TO THEM, HUMMING HAPPILY)

VERA

Who wants to go dancing, tonight?  
Flo? ...Alice?

FLO

You better stop smoking those  
funny cigarets, Vera. The only  
dance these feet are gonna do is  
a tango in epsom salt.

(VERA LOOKS AT ALICE)

ALICE

Uh-uh. I'm exhausted. I have  
some studying to do. And I want  
to spend some time with my son...  
before he starts calling me Uncle  
Mommy.

FLO

(TO VERA)

I don't know where you get your  
energy?

VERA

Oh, I don't have any energy, either.  
But, my horoscope says today's a  
good day for me to meet a man.

FLO

Don't tell me you believe that  
garbage.

VERA

It's not garbage, Flo. It's very  
scientific. And since I got into  
it, my whole life has changed.

FLO

Hell, you said the same thing  
about yoga, fasting...

ALICE

...And beef jerky.

VERA

Okay, if you don't believe me.  
I'll prove it to you.

ALICE

How?

VERA

(LOOKING AROUND)

Ah, see that fella sitting at  
the counter...

(KENNY, A YOUNG MAN WHO IS ENTHUSIASTICALLY  
TALKING TO MEL)

VERA (CONT'D)

I can tell you his sign.

FLO

(BORED)

Why?

VERA

No, I mean it.

FLO

(WEARILY)

So, do I. Why? Who cares?

VERA

By just looking at him...I'll  
bet you I can guess his sign.

ALICE

If it means we have to get up,  
you win by default.

VERA

Oh, come on. I know what he is.

(THEY RELUCTANTLY FOLLOW VERA TO COUNTER)

VERA

(TO KENNY)

You're a crab.

KENNY

(TURNING AROUND)

Huh?

VERA

(POSITIVELY)

You're a crab!

KENNY

Well, I do fly off the handle  
once in a while, but...

ALICE

(INTERRUPTING)

No, she meant your astrological  
sign.

VERA

(QUICKLY)

Don't tell me. You're Cancer...  
the Crab.

KENNY

No, I'm not.

VERA

(EQUALLY AS POSITIVE)

No...of course not. You're...ah...  
ah...

KENNY

Aries.

VERA

(HAPPILY)

Right. See. Didn't I tell you  
I knew. It's simple.

MEL

(GOOD NATUREDLY)

Vera, you know what else is simple?  
You.

VERA

(DEFENSIVELY)

Mel, Cancers' and Aries' are very  
similar.

(QUICKLY CHANGING SUBJECT)

Well, I'm going dancing. You  
sure you don't want to come?

FLO

(NODDING)

I'm taking my phone off the hook,  
the covers off the bed and fainting.

(TO MEL)

Two slaves leaving.

(VERA AND FLO AD-LIB "GOODBYES," AND EXIT)

MEL

(TO ALICE)

What're they complaining about? A  
little hard work never hurt anybody.

ALICE

Mel, if hard work hurt, we'd all be  
in intensive care.

MEL

I'm way ahead of you. ...Starting  
tomorrow, you'll have help.

ALICE

(DELIGHTED)

Great! Is she experienced? When  
did you hire her? Who is she?

MEL

(ANSWERING IN TURN)

Yes, yes, just now and...

(POINTS TO KENNY - MEL EXITS TO BACK)

ALICE

(A LITTLE SURPRISED)

Oh...sure...yeah.

KENNY

(HOLDING OUT HIS HAND)

I'm Kenny Cole.

ALICE

(SHAKING HIS HAND)

Alice, Alice Hyatt. It's nice to have you. I was just a little surprised. We've always had waitresses. But if West Point can go co-ed, why not Mel's Diner?

KENNY

If you want to know the truth, I'm surprised, too. I walked in off the street, figured I'd take a chance and I got a job. John Wayne once told me, "Take a chance, kid. What've you got to lose?"

ALICE

John Wayne? The John Wayne.

KENNY

Yeah, the Duke. Roast beef on the rare side...baked potato...sour cream and chives.

ALICE

Huh?

KENNY

(EXPLAINING)

That's how I remember people...by the food they eat. I cater lots of movies on location. (MORE)

KENNY (CONT'D)

Paul Newman used to say...

ALICE

You know Paul Newman, too?

KENNY

(SMUGLY)

Tuna on whole wheat...tossed green  
salad...and beer...from the can.

ALICE

(INDICATING HERSELF)

Alice Hyatt...chicken in the bucket,  
mashed potatoes and diet soda. If  
Paul's interested, lights out at  
ten o'clock. See you tomorrow, Ken.

KENNY

(LAUGHING)

Thanks, Alice. It's good to be  
back in Phoenix. I didn't think  
I'd land work so fast.

ALICE

Yeah, you were lucky. And Mel's  
really a nice guy...

KENNY

And he also pays pretty good.  
I mean, \$2.60 an hour is more  
than I made on the last job...

ALICE

(SUDDENLY REALIZING)

\$2.60 an hour! You're getting  
\$2.60 an hour from Mel?!!

KENNY

That's what he said. Why?

ALICE

Oh, nothing. Nothing...I was  
just a...you're sure he said  
\$2.60 an hour?

KENNY

Yeah! That's for starters.  
He said it'd go up. What are  
you getting?

ALICE

(AT DOOR)

I think, taken!

(ALICE STORMS OUT, WE:)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALICE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

(ALICE AND TOMMY ARE SEATED ON FLOOR,  
TRYING TO PUT AN OUTDOOR BARBECUE  
TOGETHER. IT IS HALF COMPLETED.  
PARTS ARE SCATTERED ALL OVER RUG.  
THE TELEPHONE IS ON FLOOR NEXT TO  
ALICE. SHE DIALS NUMBER. LISTENS,  
THEN SHAKES HER HEAD, FRUSTRATEDLY)

TOMMY

Flo's line still busy?

ALICE

(HANGING UP PHONE)

Yeah.

(INDICATING BARBECUE)

Now where are we?

TOMMY

(HOLDING UP TWO PARTS)

In trouble. These parts don't  
fit.

ALICE

We're not in trouble. Relax.

(SHE PICKS UP DIRECTIONS)

Now, it says...the W-Bar fits  
into opening "G"...which is  
connected to Flange "R" by  
toggle bolt "S".

TOMMY

(SARCASTICALLY)

Like it says on the box..."simple  
directions. ...A child can put it  
together."

ALICE

If he happens to be an atomic  
scientist.

(FRUSTRATEDLY)

Why can't they give you these lousy  
things assembled?

TOMMY

It's Hong Kong's way of saying...

(GIVES RASPBERRY)

ALICE

(PICKING UP PHONE AND DIALING)

If I have to change a light bulb...  
I panic!

TOMMY

You wanted to barbecue tonight.

ALICE

I know. We'll go out for pizza,  
instead.

(SHE LISTENS, THEN ANGRILY)

Answer the phone...

(SHE SLAMS THE PHONE DOWN)

TOMMY

Mom, she probably took it off the  
hook. You said she was going to  
sleep early.

ALICE

I guess so.

TOMMY

Man, you're really bugged about  
Mel hiring that guy, aren't you?

ALICE

Not about hiring him...about  
paying him more money. Dammit,  
it's just not fair.

TOMMY

What are you gonna do about it?

ALICE

I don't know. I mean, I want to  
talk to Flo and Vera about it and  
see what they think.

TOMMY

Look, Mom, Mel's an okay guy...  
why don't you just tell him how  
you feel?

ALICE

Maybe you're right. I'll talk  
to him when he comes in in the  
morning.

(THEN)

No...that's no good. He's always  
in a bad mood in the morning.  
I'll talk to him right after the  
breakfast rush.

(THEN)

No...no...he's even in a worse  
mood then. I know, after lunch...

(SHAKING HEAD)

No good! He's usually screaming  
at us by then.

TOMMY

Why don't you wait till Mel's in  
a good mood.

ALICE

By then we'd be on social security!

(ON HER UNHAPPY LOOK, WE:)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MEL'S DINER - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

(ALICE, FLO AND VERA ARE ENGROSSED IN  
HEATED CONVERSATION)

ALICE

That's right. \$2.60 an hour.

VERA

You're sure?

(ALICE NODS)

FLO

We're not gonna sit still for it.

We're gonna demand equal pay.

VERA

I second that.

FLO

And I know who should do the  
talking.

VERA

What'll I say?

FLO

Not you. That'd be like sending

Charo to the United Nations.

Alice, you talk to Mel.

ALICE

Why me? Why not all of us.

FLO

Because he'll yell and scare Vera

out of her wits, and I'd end up

telling him to kiss my succotash.

You'll say all the right stuff...

(MORE)

FLO (CONT'D)

Things that'll make Mel feel like  
the rat he is.

ALICE

(TO FLO)

But, you've been here the longest.  
You know Mel best.

FLO

Honey, I asked Mel for more money  
once...you want to know what he  
said?

ALICE

Yeah.

FLO

No, you don't!

ALICE

I'm not sure how to approach him.

FLO

(PICKING UP CHAIR, THEN POSING LIKE  
LION TAMER)

Try it with a whip and a chair.

(SEEING MEL - FORCING SMILE)

Oh, Hiya...

ALICE

(TO CHANGE SUBJECT)

So, Vera, you were saying...you  
went dancing last night?

VERA

(NOT CATCHING ON)

Huh? Alice, what are you...

(REALIZING)

Oh, yeah. And I met three men  
who are astrologically perfect  
for me.

FLO

(JOKINGLY)

Oh, they were breathing!

VERA

(LAUGHING)

It's too bad they were all  
married.

FLO

If you're going to be picky,  
you'll never find a man, Vera.  
Give them my number.

VERA

They already had it.

MEL

The Special today is meatloaf.

FLO

Believe me, there's nothing  
special about your meatloaf.

(FALSELY LAUGHING)

Oh, Mel...how would you ever  
get along without me?

MEL

(SARCASTICALLY)

Great, Flo. Just great.

(MEL GIVES FLO A DIRTY LOOK AND EXITS  
TO KITCHEN)

FLO

Go ahead, Alice.

ALICE

(NERVOUS)

Now?

VERA

We're with you. Anything you  
say is okay with us.

FLO

Right on.

ALICE

(TAKES DEEP BREATH)

Okay! What's right is right.  
What's fair is fair. And, I  
wish I was home in bed.

(ALICE EXITS TO KITCHEN)

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

(MEL IS SLICING ONIONS. ALICE IS  
FACING HIM, PLEADING HER CASE)

ALICE

Mel, I read this article last  
night...Do you know that half  
of all the poor families are  
headed by a woman?

(MEL NODS)

ALICE (CONT'D)

Women's life insurance rates are  
higher?

(MEL NODS)

Women's social security benefits  
are lower?

(MEL WIPES TEARS AWAY AND NODS)

All we're asking for is equal pay  
for equal work.

(MEL NODS AGAIN)

It has nothing to do with Kenny...  
he seems like a nice enough guy.  
I knew that once I told you how  
we feel you'd do what was right.

(MEL NODS, THEN ALICE CONFIDENTLY)

Thanks, Mel. I was a little worried  
when I came in to talk to you...but  
you made it very easy for me. I'll  
tell the girls that everything's  
okay...that we'll get the \$2.60 an  
hour...

MEL

No!

ALICE

(STOPPED IN HER TRACKS)

Huh?

MEL

No! I'm not giving you any more money.

ALICE

Then what was with all that nodding?

MEL

(HOLDING UP ONION)

I was trying to get the tears out of my eyes.

ALICE

(HURT)

Okay, Mel, okay...then I would like to know why you won't give us more money?

MEL

Alice, it's nothing personal. Kenny deserves more money. He's a man.

ALICE

I noticed.

MEL

(MATTER OF FACTLY)

Men get more money.

ALICE

Mel, you think that's right?

MEL

Right, wrong. Who am I? The Supreme Court? Men get more money, so I gave him more money.

ALICE

Why should men get more money?  
We're doing the same work. We've  
been here longer...

MEL

(INTERRUPTING)

Alice, that's the way it is. It's  
only a few cents.

ALICE

It may be a few cents, but it's  
a helluva big principal.

MEL

(LAUGHING)

Alice, don't start with that  
Women's Lib junk. You ain't  
Gloria Steinberg...

ALICE

Steinem. Not Steinberg.

MEL

All I know is men make more  
money. They have families...  
mouths to feed.

ALICE

Well, what do you call that  
thirteen-year old who lives  
with me? He's not a millionaire  
midget...that's family. That's  
a mouth to feed.

MEL

(SOOTHINGLY)

Take it easy, Alice. You'll get married again. Maybe not right away...you got a few good miles left. Some guy'll take care of you. You're not gonna work forever. Now, calm down.

ALICE

Okay...okay. I'm calm. And, calmly, I'd like you to reconsider.

MEL

Okay.

(AFTER A BEAT)

I've just reconsidered.

ALICE

(HOPEFULLY)

And you'll give us the raise?

MEL

No! Alice, this is my joint and I'll run it the way I want.

(ON ALICE'S FRUSTRATED LOOK, WE:)

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - THE SAME TIME

(KENNY IS SETTING UP HIS STATION. FLO AND VERA ARE ANXIOUSLY WAITING. THEY KEEP GLANCING TOWARD KITCHEN DOOR)

VERA

It's awfully quiet in there.

FLO

That's good. If Mel ain't yellin'...  
we either won or he's dead.

(ALICE ENTERS FROM KITCHEN)

VERA

(ANXIOUSLY)

Well?

FLO

(EXCITEDLY)

I bet you gave it to him with both  
barrels. He must feel lower than  
a nearsighted rattlesnake looking  
for a contact lens.

VERA

How'd we do?

ALICE

(DETERMINEDLY)

We just quit!

(ON THEIR REACTIONS, WE:)

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ALICE'S APARTMENT - TWO DAYS LATER

(TOMMY IS AT THE TABLE EATING BREAKFAST.  
ALICE IS VACUUMING)

SFX: STRANGE NOISE IN VACUUM

(ALICE SHUTS OFF VACUUM, OPENS TOP)

ALICE

What's wrong?

(SHE PULLS OUT PARTS FROM BARBECUE AND  
HANDING PARTS TO TOMMY)

Weren't you missing something?

TOMMY

Oh, great! That's the "W-Bar"  
and Flange "S". Now we'll be  
able to raise and lower the  
barbecue grate. Hey, Mom, why  
are you vacuuming again?

ALICE

Because when I'm out of work, I  
get nervous. And when I'm nervous,  
I vacuum.

TOMMY

(CONCERNED)

You'll find a job, Mom. Anybody  
would be lucky to have you working  
for them. Have you looked in the  
paper?

ALICE

(SLIDES JOB SECTION OVER, SHOWING  
HIM. THEN, READING)

"Wanted to babysit. Grandmotherly  
type."

TOMMY

(LOOKS AT HER, THEN SHAKES HIS HEAD)

You'll never pass the physical.  
There must be something in here.

ALICE

...Lawnmower mechanic, tractor  
driver, tree trimmer, welder,  
wrangler...

TOMMY

Don't they have any jobs for  
women?

ALICE

Those were the jobs for women.

(ALICE NERVOUSLY STARTS VACUUMING AGAIN)

TOMMY

(YELLS)

It's only been two days. There's  
nothing to worry about. Besides,  
if you don't find something, I  
could get a paper route.

(ALICE TURNS OFF VACUUM)

ALICE

Thanks, Tommy, that's really sweet of you. But, I don't want you delivering papers.

TOMMY

It'll be fun. Besides, I'd share the route with this girl who's really built.

ALICE

(LAUGHING)

We'll be fine. You go to school and don't worry about a thing. I can always get unemployment insurance.

TOMMY

Are you sure you're okay?

ALICE

(PUTTING VACUUM AWAY)

Sure! See, I'm calm. I'm putting the vacuum away.

(TOMMY JUMPS UP, GRABS HIS BOOKS)

TOMMY

(KISSING ALICE)

Okay, Mom. Good luck.

ALICE

Have a nice day.

(TOMMY EXITS. INSTANTLY ALICE PULLS OUT THE VACUUM AND STARTS VACUUMING)

SFX: DOORBELL RINGS

(ALICE HIDES VACUUM IN CLOSET)

ALICE

Coming. Coming.

(OPENS DOOR WITHOUT LOOKING)

Did you forget something?

(DISCOURAGED FACES ON FLO AND VERA AS  
THEY ENTER. ALICE REGISTERS SURPRISE  
AT SEEING THEM)

FLO

We've got bad news, Alice. We  
can't collect unemployment.

ALICE

We can't?

FLO

You only get it if you're  
laid off.

VERA

And we quit. It's a good thing  
my sun is in Gemini or I don't  
know if I could handle this.

(STARTS TO CRY - ALICE PUTS ARM ON VERA)

ALICE

We'll get work, Vera. There are  
always other waitress jobs around.

FLO

They're not that easy to get.  
Besides, it's taken us years to  
build up our regulars. We'd take  
home peanuts.

ALICE

I feel responsible. I got us  
all into this.

FLO

No, you did the right thing. We  
couldn't let him get away with  
that.

ALICE

(EXCITED)

Wait a minute. Why don't we try  
an employment agency. They must  
have plenty of jobs.

(GOES FOR PAPER)

Sure, right here. "Conroy Personnel,  
jobs, jobs, jobs...start today."

VERA

But what can we do?

ALICE

(JOKINGLY)

Well, if we could type...we could  
get jobs in Washington.

FLO

Honey, if we can't type we could  
get jobs in Washington.

(THEY LAUGH)

ALICE

(PSYCHING EVERYONE UP)

Who knows? We can start a new  
career.

VERA

Yeah, jobs are supposed to be opening up for women.

FLO

Right, and they all involve making beds, making change or making out.

ALICE

(THE CHEERLEADER)

Come one...we're three bright, intelligent, young...

(THEN WITH SMILE GIVES A "MAYBE YES - MAYBE NO" WAVE OF HAND)

...attractive girls. Anybody in their right mind would be happy to have us working for them. Right?

VERA

Right.

FLO

Right.

ALICE

(SUDDENLY UNSURE)

Do you really think so?

(ON ALICE'S LOOK, WE:)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONROY PERSONNEL - THAT AFTERNOON

(ALICE, FLO AND VERA, DRESSED IN THEIR  
BEST, ENTER THE SMALL, CLUTTERED OFFICE.  
ON MRS. CONROY'S DESK IS A STACK OF  
INDEX CARDS. MRS. CONROY, A MIDDLE-  
AGED WOMAN IS ON THE PHONE, NOT LOOKING  
AT THE GIRLS. WE GET THE FEELING SHE  
NEVER LISTENS TO ANYONE SHE TALKS TO)

MRS. CONROY

(INTO PHONE)

...We checked his references  
before we placed him with you.  
Now, you're certain the remarks  
he made were obscene?

(SHE LISTENS)

Uh-huh...uh-huh. ...Oh, obscene...  
definitely obscene.

(COVERS PHONE)

Yes?

ALICE

We saw your ad in the paper.

MRS. CONROY

(INTO PHONE)

Uh-huh...uh-huh...Well, we'll try  
to find somebody else.

(HANGS UP)

What do you do?

VERA

Anything.

MRS. CONROY

Uh-huh...uh-huh.

ALICE

We'll do anything.

MRS. CONROY

Uh-huh...uh-huh...but, I need  
people who do something, not  
anything.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

MRS. CONROY (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE)

Conroy Personnel, Mrs. Conroy  
speaking. Uh-huh...uh-huh...

(WRITES ON INDEX CARD)

Four farm workers?

(ALICE, FLO AND VERA EXCHANGE GLANCES,  
SHAKING THEIR HEADS "WE CAN'T DO THAT")

MRS. CONROY (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE)

I'll be able to help you out...  
uh-huh.

(TO GIRLS)

Type?

VERA

B. Negative.

FLO

She didn't mean blood type.

(TO MRS. CONROY)

No, we don't type.

MRS. CONROY

Uh-huh...uh-huh...

(INTO PHONE)

And the salary? Uh-huh...uh-huh...

(WRITES AS SHE LISTENS)

ALICE

We're dependable, we're hard  
workers, we're intelligent.

MRS. CONROY

(HOLDING UP HAND TO STOP ALICE)

Hold that thought, sweetie.

(INTO PHONE)

Uh-huh...uh-huh. I'll get back  
to you.

(HANGS UP)

I'm afraid I can't...

ALICE

(INTERRUPTS)

Look, I'm sure you'll be sympathetic  
to our situation. You're a woman.

FLO

We're waitresses. And we just  
quit our jobs.

ALICE

See, our boss hired a man to do the  
same job we were doing, and started  
him at more money than he was  
paying us.

MRS. CONROY

(FIRMLY)

He can't do that.

VERA

But he already did.

MRS. CONROY

Then he's broken the law. He's  
in violation of the Civil Rights  
Act of 1964. It's sex discrimination.

ALICE

(EXCITEDLY)

What can we do about it?

MRS. CONROY

File a complaint with the Office of  
Equal Employment. You're entitled  
to a hearing and your former  
employer will be forced to testify,  
whether he wants to or not!

FLO

(TO GIRLS)

Isn't that great. We got him  
where it hurts.

MRS. CONROY

(MATTER OF FACTLY)

It won't do you any good. You  
can't win.

ALICE

What do you mean?

VERA

You heard Flo, we've got him  
where it hurts.

MRS. CONROY

Girls, he'll appeal...that'll  
take forever, it could cost you  
a fortune...and they'll rule in  
his favor, anyway. Happens every  
time.

ALICE

(CONFUSED)

Then what do we do?

MRS. CONROY

Beats me? Guess you've got to  
get a job.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

(MRS. CONROY ANSWERS PHONE)

MRS. CONROY (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE)

Conroy Employment Agency. Uh-huh...  
uh-huh... You're looking for  
what? Uh-huh...uh-huh...

(SIGNALS TO THEM)

Are you in luck.

(INTO PHONE)

Uh-huh...-uh-huh. I might be able  
to handle that for you if they  
haven't been snapped up already.

(AS MRS. CONROY HANGS UP, SHE HOLDS UP  
INDEX CARD, ON WHICH SHE'S BEEN WRITING)

MRS. CONROY (CONT'D)

Just solved your problem, girls...  
place called Mel's Diner. ...Uh-huh  
...uh-huh...

(ON THEIR REACTION, WE:)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ALICE'S APARTMENT - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

(ALICE IS FURIOUSLY VACUUMING WHEN TOMMY  
ENTERS - TOMMY REACTING TO VACUUM;  
SYMPATHETIC)

TOMMY

Haven't found a job, huh?

(ALICE TURNS OFF VACUUM)

ALICE

No, but we have the cleanest  
carpets in town.

TOMMY

I know you, Mom, you'll find  
something. Don't get discouraged.  
Five days isn't that long.

ALICE

You could have fooled me. If I  
don't find something soon, ground  
chuck will become an endangered  
species around here.

TOMMY

Maybe you should call Mel and...

ALICE

No! I'll find a job. I had an offer today...

TOMMY

(INTERRUPTS)

Why didn't you say something?

That's great!

ALICE

To be a cocktail waitress at The Cat's Meow. But, I'm going to hold out for something that doesn't involve wearing a tail.

TOMMY

A tail? What else do you wear?

ALICE

That's it, Ace.

TOMMY

I know it's been hard, Mom, but I'm proud of you. You really stuck to your guns.

ALICE

Thanks, Tommy. That's very sweet.

TOMMY

(MISCHIEVOUSLY)

But so did those guys at the Alamo...and you know what happened to them.

(HE RUNS FINGER ACROSS NECK)

ALICE

(LAUGHING IN SPITE OF HERSELF)

Do your homework, Dummy.

(AS TOMMY EXITS TO BEDROOM, ALICE PUTS  
AWAY THE VACUUM

SFX: DOORBELL

(ALICE OPENS DOOR. MEL ENTERS.  
IT'S OBVIOUSLY AWKWARD FOR BOTH)

ALICE

Mel!

MEL

(UNCOMFORTABLY)

Hi, Alice. I came to see how  
you're getting along.

ALICE

Oh, we're fine. Sit down.

(MEL SITS DOWN)

MEL

And Flo and Vera?

ALICE

They're fine.

MEL

Fine. Everybody's fine. Fine.

ALICE

Can I get you something? A drink?  
Coffee?

MEL

No, thanks, Alice. Ah...ah...I  
was just in the neighborhood.

ALICE

How's everything with you?

MEL

Oh...fine. Just great.

ALICE

Great.

MEL

(TAKING A DEEP BREATH)

You know, Alice, I expected you to call. I figured you'd think it over, you'd see how silly it is for a few cents...

ALICE

Funny, I thought the same thing.

(THERE'S A BEAT OF SILENCE)

ALICE

(FINALLY)

Okay, Mel, why are you here?

MEL

(LETTING IT ALL HANG OUT)

Because I think you're being stubborn and ridiculous! You should be back on the job! You need the work and the money! Now stop acting like a spoiled kid!

ALICE

(SARCASTICALLY)

How can anybody turn down an offer like that?

ALICE (CONT'D)

(MEANINGFULLY)

Thanks for stopping by, Mel.

MEL

Be honest, Alice. You need the money.

ALICE

Of course I need the money...

MEL

So?

ALICE

No!

MEL

(DISGUSTEDLY)

Broads. Dammit, Alice, come back...

I want you all to come back.

That's why I came over.

ALICE

(FIRMLY)

You'll pay us the same as Kenny?

MEL

(AFTER A BEAT)

Okay.

ALICE

(DELIGHTED, HUGS AND KISSES MEL)

Oh, Mel, that's terrific.

MEL

No problem. I'll lower Kenny's salary to match yours.

(ALICE GLARES AT MEL, WHO THEN BREAKS  
INTO LAUGHTER)

MEL

I'm kidding, you nut. You can't  
hate a guy for trying.

ALICE

(HAPPILY)

Mel, tell the truth...why'd you  
finally give us the raise?

MEL

Business was going down the tubes!  
Our regulars stopped coming in.  
They didn't get as turned on  
pinching Kenny or me as they did  
pinching you broads.

ALICE

(TEASING)

Hey, Mel...

(SHE PINCHES HIM ON BEHIND)

You know what? ...They're right!

(THEY BOTH LAUGH AND HE EXITS, ON ALICE'S  
HAPPY EXPRESSION, WE:)

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

FADE IN:

INT. DINER - THE NEXT MORNING

(VERA AND FLO ARE SERVING CUSTOMERS.

ALICE GIVES CHECK TO BUFORD)

BUFORD

Alice, sweetheart...I'm sure  
happy to see you gals back.

(LEERING)

I'm also happy to see your  
front.

ALICE

(SHE'S BEEN THROUGH THIS BEFORE)

Buford, your heart's as big  
as the State of Arizona...

(SMILING)

And so's your mouth!

BUFORD

(CHUCKLING)

See you tomorrow, Alice.

(TO HIMSELF)

"And so's your mouth..."

ALICE

Bye, Bufe.

(HE LAUGHINGLY EXITS - FLO AND VERA  
CROSS TO ALICE)

VERA

Boy, I'm really happy to be  
working, again.

FLO

(HOLDING UP NICKLE TIP)

Things sure haven't changed.

(KENNY ENTERS, WEARING STREET CLOTHES)

KENNY

Hey, I wanted to come in and say  
goodbye to you all.

FLO

Goodbye?

KENNY

Yeah, I quit last night. Jack  
called me yesterday...

ALICE

Jack?

KENNY

Nicholson. He's doing this movie  
in Tucson and wants me to work  
on it.

ALICE

You know Jack Nicholson?

KENNY

He's a buddy.

FLO

He can leave his cuckoo under my  
nest any time...

VERA

What's he like?

KENNY

Jack? Burger, hold the bun...  
cottage cheese...

ALICE

(FACETIOUSLY)

Gee, he always struck me as an  
enchiladas, side of guacamole  
kind of guy...

KENNY

No..no...that sounds like Chill  
Wills...or Alan Ludden...or  
Barbara Walters...

(ON THEIR REACTION, WE:)

FADE OUT:

THE END